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## HUMANITY OF JESUS.

*Jesus, a man approved of God by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did by him.—Acts. 2, 22.*

Christian auditors, whilst I undertake to vindicate the truth of the Apostolic doctrine contained in my text, I feel all that embarrassment which so powerfully tends to distract a speaker, who knows that prejudice, popularity, and the early bias of education have already raised ramparts, turrets, and strong walls against his efforts to capture the citadel of your hearts, or obtain your assent to one of the most plain and interesting doctrines of the Christian Religion. Be assured, brethren, I do not feel concerned for myself alone, but for you also. You love, I trust, the blessed name of Jesus. Suffer me to say, that I love him also; and would not, I humbly believe, speak a word, diminutive of his real honor and dignity, to save life or gain a world! But may we not err by thinking too highly of our benefactors, especially when they gain such an ascendency in our estimation as to intercept the reverence and worship due to the Creator alone! This I apprehend to be the fact in relation to the meek and lowly Jesus, the friend and benefactor of mankind. My object, therefore, in this discourse, shall be to prove that *the simple humanity of Christ*, is the doctrine of the gospel; and to show you the intimacy of that relationship, which subsists between you and him, whom God has exalted to be Lord and Christ, Prince and Saviour.

Various have been, and still are the opinions of Christian professors concerning their Master. Some suppose him to be the Supreme God of the universe; others, the Son of the Father, by an eternal and ineffable generation. A third class believe in his pre-existence as an Angelic being; whilst a fourth regards him, as altogether one of the human family, differing from his brethren, only by the high office and extraordinary qualifications, which the Deity bestowed on him, as the captain of our salvation. Against the first opinion, reason, philosophy, and revelation combinedly depose. None but the most obstinate and wilfully blinded will continue to advocate such a manifest impossibility. Nor can it obtain support from any other than the deplorably ignorant, the deceitful

hireling, or those who have prostituted their rational powers at the shrine of superstition, and fallen victims to ungodly fear!! Having combatted this absurd doctrine, in the foregoing lecture, I shall not resume the discussion of the same subject ; but proceed to examine the evidence for his divine sonship and pre-existence.

The doctrine of a subordinate or demi-god creating worlds and then becoming incarnate and dwelling with men, is such an anomaly as, at least, requires express revelation. “ I am not a Philosopher exercising the speculations of my uncertain reason to form a conjectural proposition ; I am a Christian endeavoring to ascertain the meaning of an infallible proposition, which I allow is laid down by God himself. My concern is not with what God *may* do ; but with what he declares he *hath done*. His deity is his glory : hath he given it to another ? *I am Jehovah and there is none else ; there is no God besides me. A just God and a Saviour, there is none besides me. Is there a God besides me ? Yea, there is no God, I know not any.* Is. 45. 5. 21, and 46. 9. This is the God of my bible ; but besides this God, we are told there is another god, a delegated god. Here are two gods ; a supreme God and a subordinate god ; a natural god, and an artificial god ; a great god and a little god. A Philosopher has one God ; a Jew has one God ; a Christian, it seems, has two gods. What a world of difficulties belong to this proposition ! Is this delegated god entitled to worship ? The idea of a God without a title to religious worship is inadmissible. Is all worship due to the subordinate god, or does the supreme God claim any ? Which acts of devotion belong to the one, and which to the other ? A mistake would be dangerous, and I have no guide. Every inspired writer forsakes me. Jesus Christ, it seems, created all things that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible ; and a creator proves by creating, his eternal power and godhead, Rom. 1, 20. The proposition supposes that God may empower a creature to create. Perhaps he may. But God declares he has not done so. *Who measured the waters in the hollows of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span ? Who comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance ? Lift up your eyes on high and behold, who hath created the heavens ? Hast thou not known ? Hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary ? Is. 40, 12, 26—28.* I am therefore obliged to reject the notion of a subordinate god, and a delegated creator.”

DIVINE SONSHIP has been urged as the grand orthodox plea for the deity of Jesus, since the time of Justin Martyr. Aristotle, the later Platonists and Pythagoreans, believed in the existence of super-mundane deities ; and taught, that the world and all the inferior

gods proceeded eternally from the Great First Cause, by way of emanation. Justin, being a Platonic Philosopher, introduced this dogma into the Christian religion about one hundred years after the death of our blessed Master—*Hinc illæ lacrymae!!* Hence the origin of the Christian polytheism and idolatry.

How the Trinitarian hypothesis of consubstantiality and co-eternity can agree with the notion of Sonship, I am unable to conceive; and therefore leave the advocates of mysticism, and enemies of reason, to harmonize these discordant sounds. The doctrine, I am convinced, is not only naturally impossible, but also contrary to the general tenor of the Holy Scriptures. Men may beget sons who may increase in bodily and mental faculties, so as to equal their parents; but with God, this is impossible.

Jehovah can neither communicate his own self-existence, nor the infinity of his attributes; for then he would communicate himself, and necessarily cease to exist. All things created, must be limited, and consequently, want all the properties of the one Jehovah. Accordingly, the sacred writers describe Jesus as a dependent and subordinate being, and never once, in all their writings, do they ascribe to him one of the essential attributes of Deity.

Christ is called the Son of God, on account of his office as Messiah. It appears plainly, in the Gospel history, that these two titles, the Son of God, and the Messiah, were synonymous among the Jews, at the time of our Lord's public ministry. When St. John, at the end of his Gospel, declares, that what he had written was in order "that they might believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God," it is plain, that he uses the terms, Son of God, as only another phrase for the Christ, that is, the Messiah. The same is true of Nathaniel's declaration on seeing our Saviour: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." When the Jews asked our Lord, "Art thou the Son of God?" their meaning undoubtedly was, art thou the Messiah? And thus that very question is expressed in Mark xiv. 61. "Art thou the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed?"

It would be wasting your time to say more on this subject. Such is the true account of a phraseology in Scripture, which, though easy and intelligible, has produced some of the grossest conceptions of the Deity and exposed Christianity to ridicule and scorn. If men who endeavor to disseminate the doctrine of Emanations and Processions, would cease to anathematize those of a different opinion, and condescend to use their reason, we might then demand, with certain success, whether it be possible that a derived being can be independent? Can such a being subsist necessarily in the first moment of its existence? If not, can it in the second or any subsequent instant? Must not all derived beings owe the

continuance of their existence to that cause which first produced them? Then will acumen, candour and openness to conviction induce them to perceive and confess, that by supposing the existence of a being to continue, when that on which it depends ceases, they suppose an effect without a cause; and seeing their favorite system ruined, they will be ashamed of their fashionable semi-atheism; and be compelled to acknowledge, that all the creatures of God do incessantly depend on him for the continuance of their existence."

Some Trinitarians have observed the force of this reasoning, and have therefore abandoned their heathenish notions of filial Deities. Dr. A Clarke, on Luke i. 35. says, "The doctrine of the Eternal Sonship, is, in my opinion, anti-scriptural, and highly dangerous. I reject it, for the following reasons: I have not been able to find any express declaration concerning it in the Scriptures. Eternity has no beginning, nor reference to time. Son implies time, generation, and father. Generation implies a time in which it was effected, and a time previous to such generation. Father, in reference to son, implies priority; and consequently, in this case, superiority. This destroys the eternity of our Lord, and robs him at once of his Godhead. The conjunction of the terms, Son and Eternity, is absolutely impossible, as they imply essentially, different and opposite ideas."

The titles given to Christ, are entirely inadequate to prove him either a god or a pre-existent spirit; for most of these titles are applied to other men; and if there be any title given to Jesus, that cannot apply to another man, it is peculiar to him as the Messiah. Is Jesus called the Son of God? So, in the language of Scripture, are all good men. God says to Pharaoh, "Israel is my son; let my son go."—Exodus, iv. 22. And elsewhere, he says, "Bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth." Is he called the only begotten Son? So Isaac is called the only begotten son of Abraham. "I am a Father to Israel, says Jehovah; and Ephraim is my first born, or only begotten son."—Jer. xxxi. 9. Is he called god? So were all magistrates and prophets.—Ps. lxxxii. 1. John x. 35. Is he called Christ? So was Cyrus, Is. xlvi. 1. and David called Saul, Jehovah's Christ; saying, Shall I stretch out my hand against the Lord's anointed? Lastly is he called the form or image of God? So man was made in the form of God, and the new man or Christian is the image of God who created him, Ephes. iv. 24. Christ being called the image of the invisible God, plainly implies that God cannot be seen, and intimates to us the reason why he is called the form or image of Jehovah, because in him eminently shone forth the perfections of Deity.

The advocates of the Divine sonship, generally ascribe to Jesus,

the formation of the material world. But the sacred writers have been peculiarly careful to prevent the least possibility of mistake. They always attribute the creation of the Universe to the God and Father of Jesus; but whenever they speak of Christ as performing any great or important action, they are peculiarly careful to use such language as to designate Jesus the instrumental, but never the first, cause of the action. As *dia*, in Greek, always denotes the agent an instrument, John and Paul mark this distinction by the phrase, *di'autou. through him.* John, 1, 3, Col. 1. 16. The scriptures acknowledge no more creators than one,. Thus saith Jehovah, who created the heavens, who stretched forth the earth, and gave breath to the people upon it, Is. 42. 5. O give thanks to him that by wisdom made the heavens, and stretched out the earth over the waters. Ps. 136. 5, 6. Both Jesus and his apostles teach that God the Father created the visible world and all things therein. The Apostles collected address their prayer to the only God and Father of the Universe, saying, Lord, thou art God, who made heaven and earth, the sea and all things that are in them. Acts 4. 24. Christ and the apostles distinguish the Creator of the heavens and the earth from Jesus Christ, Acts 4. 24, 27, 30; and 17, 24—28, 31; Luke 10, 21; Mat. 6, 30. and 19, 4. Isaiah also distinguishes the Messiah, whom he predicts, from the Creator of the heavens and the earth, 42 1, 5, 6; 44, 24; 45, 13, 21, 22. Moses declares by the word of God the whole visible world, was created, Gen. 1, 1, and Ex. 20. 11. Lastly, the Psalmist asserts Jehovah alone was the Creator of the world and all things therein, 33, 6—9; 89, 8—11; 146, 5, 6.

The careful reader will easily distinguish a two-fold creation in the scriptures. The formation of all things, which they attribute to God alone, and the renovation of all things, which they ascribe to Jesus Christ. Hence Paul says if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation, 2 Cor. 5, 18. Behold I make all things new. Rev. 21, 5. Accordingly when Paul says, all things were created by Jesus, he means all things were created anew by him. This was the opinion of Calvin, Grotius, and Beausobre. When it is said all things were made by Jesus; and that by him God created the worlds, the Greek verbs are in the aorist tense, and may relate, indefinitely, to any time; and if they did refer, exclusively, to the past, the language would then be only similar to that of the prophet. Is. 9. 6.

John, 1, 3. Eph. 3, 9. Col. 1, 16, and Heb. 1, 2, are the passages in the sacred volume that can be produced with even an appearance of propriety in favor of Christ having acted as a delegated creator in the formation of the world. I have said a delegate creator, for the above passages in the original Greek do not represent Christ as the first cause of the actions said to have been perfor-

med by him ; but only as the instrumental cause, in subordination to some other being, who operated by him as the instrument. In the above texts, the phrases *di'auton*, *di'ou*, *dia Jesou Christou*, are peculiarly emphatical, and show the great care of the apostles to keep in view the supremacy of the Eternal Jehovah, and to distinguish between the all controlling, uncontroled power of Almighty God, and that delegated power which Christ exercised in subordination to the will of the Father. Though the preposition, *dia*, with a genitive, occur nearly 300 times in the New-Testament, it always marks the instrument, except in two places. Rom. 11, 36. Heb. 2, 10. The phraseology used, Mat. 1, 22, is a fair specimen of the mode of writing, adopted by the penmen of the New Testament. In the phrase *HUPO tou Kuriou DIA Prophetou, by the Lord, thro' the prophet.* The word *hupo* denotes the first cause, or original operator, and the preposition *dia* distinguishes the instrument through the medium of which the action was performed. These observations are peculiarly worthy the attention, both of the Greek scholar and Theological Inquirer.

John 1, 3. The beginning in this Gospel means the commencement of the Christian dispensation & not the beginning of the world, as some have imagined. To be persuaded of the validity of this assertion, the inquirer needs only to consult Chap. 6, 64, and 15, 27. *All things were made by Jesus*, does not imply that he created any thing, that all things relative to the the new system, were transacted according to his direction. "God, says Mr. Locke, frames and manages the whole new creation by Jesus Christ." *Omnia fecit nova Christus, Christ made all things new*, says Calvin. The Apostles therefore speak of the *regeneration*, but not of the *creation* of all things by Jesus. The verb, *egeneto*, translated, *made*, in this verse, never signifies to create, in the New-Testament ; though it occur more than 700 times. In this Gospel it occurs 63 times and signifies *to be, to become, to be done, or happen.* See Chap. 15, 7, and also 19, 36 : also Mat. 5, 18 : 6, 8 : 21, 42 : 26, 6. All, therefore, that can be inferred from this passage, is, that all things, in the Gospel dispensation, were done by the authority or direction of Jesus, the Messiah. But there is a powerful objection to the use of this passage, which shall be mentioned elsewhere.

Ephes. 3, 9. This is the next passage in the New-Testament where creation seems to be attributed to Jesus as the instrument under God. But, unfortunately for orthodoxy, the words, "by Jesus Christ," are wanted in the Alexandrine, Vatican, Ephrem, Cambridge, and several other MSS. Also in the Syriac, Coptic, Aethiopic, Itala, Vulgate, and the Arabic of Erpen, which is the best copy of that version. They are also omitted by several of the fathers. Griesbach has thrown the words out of his text, and professor White

says "they are indisputably spurious." No argument therefore can be brought to support an absurd doctrine from a spurious passage disavowed by the best MSS. versions, and editions of the holy scriptures. We agree with Dr. A. Clarke, that nothing "can be argued from a clause, of whose spuriousness there is the strongest evidence."

Col. 1. 16, "*by him all things were created.*" This clause has been triumphantly adduced to prove the creation of all things by Jesus Christ. But most of our remarks on John 1, 3. will apply to this passage also. Calvin, Grotius, Locke, Pierce, Lardner and Beausobre, understood the passage, of the regeneration, and not of the creation of all things. We are emboldened to add our name to so highly respectable a catalogue. The verb, *Ktizo*, in the Greek of the above clause, does not exclusively signify *to create* : for if so, the Greek version of Prov. 8; 22, would destroy the Trinitarian doctrine. Because that passage makes wisdom, which, they suppose to be Christ, to say, "the Lord created me." Dionysius Romanus, affirms that *ektise* signifies, *appointed*. "Men, says he, who have erred from the truth, contrary to holy writ, mistake it for *epoiese*, but these words are very different." Athanasius, in his second oration, and Eusebius against Marcellus, agree in opinion with Dionysius as to the signification of the verb *ektise* ; and render it constituted or appointed. Taking, therefore, as our guide, the opinion of these men, who were certainly competent judges of the import of a Greek word, we have the meaning of the apostle in the following terms ; "*by him, Christ, all things*, relative to the Christian dispensation, *were appointed*. Such was the meaning which the Apostle designed to communicate in the above passage. For that the apostle in the last passage does not intend the creation of natural substances is evident ; for, 1st. He does not say that by him were created heaven and earth, but things in heaven and things on earth ; 2nd He does not specify things, but states of things, as thrones, dominions, &c. which are only ranks and orders of beings in the rational and moral world. 3dly This opinion is confirmed by the 15th and 18th verses where Christ is described as the first or head of the new creation. 4thly The creation of the heavens, earth, sea, and all things in them, is uniformly and invariably ascribed to the Father both in the old and New Testament. Hence it follows, that the creation which the apostle ascribes to Christ, is that great change in the moral world introduced by the dispensation of the Gospel, which is often called a creation or new creation. This great change the apostle here describes under the symbol of a revolution ; introduced by Christ amongst certain ranks and orders of beings, by which according to the Jewish Demonology borrowed from the Oriental philosophy, the affairs of states and individuals were superintended. In the same imagery Jews and Christians, who enjoy-

ed the light of Divine revelation, residing figuratively in heaven, are represented as constituting a polity under the government of angels, principalities, and powers ; so the unevangelized world is a polity, under the government of a fictitious personage, called Satan, the ruler of the air, or Jupiter, and his angels. Eph. i. 20 and ii. 2, 6.

Heb. 1. 2. *By whom also he made the worlds.* *Di'ou kai tous aionas epoiesen.* What could induce the translators to render *aion*, *World* ? We can assign no other reason than the love of system, which lead them here, as in many other places, to corrupt the word of God in order to make it support their traditions. The term, *aion*, in the New Testament, never means the material world ; consequently, there is nothing said in this passage about creation of any kind, by any being whatever ! Doddridge and Wakefield translate the clause, “ *By whom also, he constituted or established the ages.* ” — The Syriac, Vulgate, and Arabic read, “ *Through whom he made or founded the ages.* ” Dr. Sykes explains the phrase, by saying that the different extraordinary dispensations were made by or for Christ. But we think differently, and will undertake to show that none of the above versions give the sense of the original. From the first verse it appears that the prophets were the principal agents in the dispensations previous to that of the Messiah, and that Christ succeeded them in managing a subsequent dispensation. Hence he is declared in this epistle to have become *a high priest of future good things.* Chap. 9. 11 ; and the Mediator of a new covenant, 8. 6.— Both the old and New Testaments describe the previous dispensations as preparatory to the last and best age of the Messiah, but never intimate that they were appointed on account of the Messiah. Col. 1. 12--23 ; John 1. 17.

According to the Hebrew idiom, which prevails in this epistle,— the plural number is often used for the singular superlative ; therefore the true signification of *aionas*, in this place, is *the age* by way of eminence, hence *agia* implies the most holy place, Heb. 9. 24. *Tous ouranous*, the true Heaven chap. 4, 14. The plural number is used both in the old and new Testaments to express the age of the Messiah. The *eschetai hemerai* of the prophets and the *eschetois chro-noi* of the apostle have this signification. Is. 2. 2, Dan. 10. 14, Micah 4, 1 ; 1 Pet. 1. 20. This rendering is farther confirmed by the peculiar name of the Messiah. Is. 9. 6. where the Prophet calls him *Abi od*, Heb. *Pater mellontos aionos*, Sept. Alex. Father of the future age. The term, *aionas*, therefore, should be rendered *age*, and the whole phrase “ *by whom also he constituted the age.* ” Hence we fairly and correctly conclude, that the sacred scriptures afford no support to the doctrine, which supposes Christ to have been the creator of the worlds.

THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST is not a doctrine of revelation, but

seems to have been brought into Christianity, by some of the learned converts from Heathenism; in order to render the religion of Jesus more agreeable to the Pagan Philosophy. Dr. Mosheim refers to Cudworth's "Intellectual System" for proof that Alexander followed Origen, and Plato, in his speculations concerning the Logos, a term afterwards applied to Christ. The doctrine of Christ's pre-existence is, however, a dred of the Pythagorean and Platonic Philosophy, which combinedly, taught the pre-existence and transmigration of souls. Notwithstanding as some passages in the New Testament seem at least according to the English translation, to favor the notion of Christ's pre-existence, I shall undertake an impartial examination of them, in the order in which they occur in the sacred volume.

John, 1, 1, 14. In the beginning was the word—the word was made flesh. From these words, men have argued that Christ was with the Father in the beginning of time; and became incarnated four thousand years afterwards! But by comparing John 6. 64; 5. 27, and 16. 4; Luke 1, 2, and 1 John 2. 7, the weakest shall be satisfied, and the most stubborn compelled to admit, that the word, *beginning*, is limited to the commencement of the Gospel dispensation, when Christ began to be about thirty years of age. Luke 3, 23. The phrase, *ho logos sarks egeneto*, in the 14th verse, should have been translated, *the word was flesh*, that is a real man; and the meaning of the Evangelist is, that this divinely commissioned person *was truly a man*, not in appearance only, as the Gnostics taught, but really, so that he was seen & felt, and lived familiarly with his disciples, manifesting all the characteristic infirmities of man. That the word, *flesh*, is often used to signify man, appears sufficiently evident from Gen. 6. 12, 7, 21. Num. 27. 16. Ps. 56, 4. Luke, 3, 6. John 17, 2. Hence we clearly perceive that John says nothing at all about a pre-existent being becoming incarnate, as some have vainly imagined.

John 1. 15. *He was before me*, and Col. 1. 17, *he is before all things*, have been considered as plain declarations of Christ's pre-existence. But seeing no Grecian can deny, that *protos* signifies chief or principal; the phrase may therefore be correctly translated, *he was my superior, or principal. Pro*, from which *Protos* is derived, many also signify superiority; consequently, nothing favorable to Christ's pre-existence, can be justly inferred from these or similar passages.

John, 8, 58. Jesus said unto them, before Abraham was I am. In this passage two difficulties, are contained which have exercised the pens of commentators and Polemics. The first consists in our Lord's declaration that he was before Abraham. The second in applying to himself the terms *I am*; by which phrase according to the English translation of the bible, Jehovah designates himself. Let us first take the latter difficulty into consideration.

Moses had asked God his name, and what he should say to the children of Israel, if they enquired from what authority he derived his commission. To which God replied ; **I AM THAT I AM.** Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel ; **I am hath sent me unto you.**" Ex. 3, 14. No text of scripture was ever more perverted by a wrong translation, than this in Exodus. The original Hebrew stands thus ; "I will be who I will be ;" or perhaps more properly, "I will be what I am ;" a form of words expressive of the eternal existence & unalterable nature of Jehovah. The Septuagint reads, "I am the existing, or "he who exists." "The existing hath sent me." To make therefore, the *I am* of the Evangelist, a reference to this passage of the Pentateuch is a most idle fancy, unsupported by the original ; and what is more to the purpose, it is equally unsupported by the Septuagint ; the text book of the Gospel writers. The Syr. Sam. vers. Sam. Targ. Onk. and Pers. adopt the words as they are in the Hebrew as an appellative without any interpretation. The Arabic has "the Eternal who will never pass away. The Targ. Jon. B. Uz. well expresses the sense by 'I am he who am and will be.' But the Vulgate has *Ego sum qui sum*, from which our translation appears to have been taken. This difficulty is therefore the offspring of mere ignorance. The phrase *I am* has not the least claim to be esteemed a name of Jehovah. Our translators should have supplied the pronoun *he* in this verse as in verse 24. Then both texts would have read alike. "Before Abraham was I am **He.**" Unless you believe, that **I am He**, (the Messiah.)

The second difficulty arises from a prolepsis frequent in the phraseology of the New Testament. It was determined in the counsels of Providence before the ages—before Abraham was, that the Messiah should appear ; so Christians were selected or pre-ordained before the foundation of the world, Eph. 1, 4. 5. 2 Tim. 1, 9; so the names of the servants of God were written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, Rev. 12, 8. 17. 8. Events DETERMINED are often described in scripture as *accomplished*, see Matt. 17, 11; 26. 45. Heb. 12, 22-25. Moreover in this very chapter Abraham's conviction of a future Saviour was so strong, that he is said to have *seen* the day of his coming as if it had actually arrived. The Targ. Jon. Ben. Uz. with which the Targ. Jerus. corresponds in Gen. 3, 24. says, "before the world was created, Jehovah created the Law ; he prepared the Garden of Eden for the Just ; and Gehennah for the wicked." Such language was customary among the Jews. The interpretation of this passage is easy, before Abraham be I am ; or I exist before Abraham : for he never can be really Abraham, till all the families of the earth are blessed in me ! Hence Beza here observes that the meaning is, Christ was before Abram in the divine decree : so also Grotius on John 17, 5. The Greek phrase *Prin abraam genesthai, ego eimi*, is correctly translated ; before Abraham

*become, I am.* The phrase will then appear elliptical but the ellipsis can be easily supplied ; and it then reads thus, before Abraham become the father of many nations, I exist. This interpretation is perfectly easy and natural, the promise to Abraham will be accomplished in his seed which is Christ : and when all the nations are blessed in Christ, Abram will then have become Abraham or the father of many nations ; but not till Christ shall have reconciled all nations, and brought them to realize God's promise to that Patriarch. Hence we see that Christ must be before Abraham, and the passage says nothing whatever either about Christ's deity or pre-existence.

How ridiculous must the defenders of Christ's Deity appear on hearing the true meaning of this text !! How contemptible, how unprincipled are those doughty champions of Orthodoxy, who decide on controverted points of doctrine with the most dogmatical assurance without possessing the *first* requisite of theological criticism, the ability of consulting, in the original languages, the records of eternal Salvation !!

John 17. 5. has often been adduced as decisive proof of Christ's residence, in the heavens, before his appearance on earth ; but the honest inquirer will easily perceive, that Christ did not say he was with the Father, but only that he had glory or honor with the Father, before the world existed. The preposition, *para*, translated *with*, should be rendered, *in the presence of*. When Christ tells his disciples, Mat. 5. 12, and 6. 1, of their reward in heaven, *para Patri*, in the presence of the Father, none will hence infer that the disciples were either in heaven, or ever had been there ; no more ought we to infer, from John, 17. 5, that Christ had ever been in heaven. In John 1. 5, it is said there was a man sent, *para theou*, *from the presence of God*, but none thence conclude that John pre-existed in heaven before he was born of Elizabeth. Paul tells the Ephesians, Chap. 1. 4, that God had *chosen them before the foundation of the world*, consequently the argument for the pre-existence of these Ephesians is just as strong from the words of Paul, as that for the pre-existence of Christ, from John 17. 5. Compare this passage with Titus 1. 2, and 1 Peter, 1. 20. In this solemn address to God, Jesus prays not for a restoration of withdrawn honor, but to be put in possession of that dignity and glory, which God had fore-ordained to bestow on him, as the reward of his services in the faithful discharge of the mediatorial office. In this point of view, the passage has been understood by the most eminent commentators of different sects in the Christian world. Grotius says, " Christ was before Abraham in the same sense as the Rabbins say, in *Talmud. de votis*, the law was before the world ;" and refers with great propriety to 1 Peter 1. 20, and Rev. 13. 8. For if it can be said Christ was *fore-ordained before the world* ; and *slain from the foundation of the world*, it may also be said he had glory *with the Father before the world*

was. Beza says, by the day of Christ, we understand his nativity. Abraham saw it by faith, for *Christ was before Abraham in the Divine decree*. Surely therefore, that doctrine must be meekly and implicitly received, which stands on no better foundation than such irrational and illegal inferences?

1 Cor. 10. 4 and 9. Because the rock, from which the Israelites obtained water in the wilderness, is here denominated Christ, some have inferred that Jesus was that rock. When Moses preferred the reproach of Christ to the treasures of Egypt, Heb. 11. 26, will any suppose that Christ was known to the Egyptians, and despised by them? Certainly not. Israel was the Christ to which the Apostle alludes, who bore reproach in Egypt, Ps. 105. 15. The word Christ signifies, *the anointed or the Sent*. Nothing therefore can be inferred from a mere name; and those christians, who believe their Christ a morsel, of bread, which they can eat daily, are not more stupid than those, who imagine he has been a rock or a fountain of water. In the ninth verse, the apostle advises the Corinthians not to tempt God as some of the Israelites tempted; for so the text reads in several of the best MSS.

1 Cor. 15. 47. is triumphantly adduced as irrefragable proof of our Master's celestial origin: and because the verse, in the English bible, says, *the second man is the Lord from heaven* the little divines, who have never seen any other, suppose no believer in the simple humanity of Christ, can have the effrontery or infidelity to reply. But let them know that the best MSS. versions, and most eminent Fathers omit the word, *Lord*, and read the verse thus; *the first man is of the earth, earthly; the second man is of heaven, heavenly*. The attentive reader will easily perceive that the Apostle does not here compare Christ with other men; but **DESCRIBES THE FIRST STATE OF MAN BEFORE THE CHANGE, PRODUCED BY DEATH; AND THE SECOND STATE OF THE SAME MAN AFTER HE IS MADE SPIRITUAL AND IMMORTAL.** I am happy to find Dr. A. Clarke so honest and bold on this passage as to discard the word, *Lord*, from the text, and express his opinion that Paul is not here speaking of Christ at all. Let not, therefore, so weak an argument be, henceforth, offered in proof of such an unreasonable doctrine.

Col. 1. 15. *The first born of every creature.* Rev. 3. 14. *The beginning of the creation of God.* The truly learned and laborious Dr. Lardner, says these phrases imply that Christ is the chief or most excellent of the whole creation, Grotius, in loco. "primogenitum Hebreis dicitur, et quod primum et quod summum est, in quoque genere." Pelagius in loco. "Primogenitus non tempore sed honore, Juxta illud; filius meus primogenitus Israel. Now the amount of the whole testimony of these learned commentators is this; the first begotten, only begotten, and most beloved, are synonymous phrases. According to the Hebrew idiom, the greatest

or best beloved was called the first or only begotten. Hence Isaac is called the only begotten son of Abraham, though he was neither the only son nor the first born. See Prov. 4. 3; Mat. 3. 17; Mark 1. 6, and 9. 7; Luke 3. 22; and Heb. 11. 17. Hence also it is manifest that *arche*, the beginning, Rev. 3. 14, means the chief or most noble of the new creation or christian church.

We have now finished our examination of those scriptures which have been generally adduced to prove the Deity, Divine Sonship, and pre-existence of Jesus, and have found them a collection of unscriptural passages generally vitiated by designing men with a view to support their unhallowed traditions. Indeed almost all the noble corruptions of the sacred text, that have been detected, are, manifestly, the pious frauds of those who have turned aside after other gods and forsaken the fountain of living waters. The uniform testimony of the sacred writers is, *that Jesus was a man*. In contradiction to this testimony, a class of designing men refer us to a few idiomatical or obscure passages of which they, themselves, are perhaps the most ignorant. Their mere reference they consider adequate proof, that the testimony of Christ and his apostles is either false or defective: for though they admit, he bore witness to the truth, yet they assert, not to the whole truth. He was a man; but he was moreover a god or an angel! To the first proposition we assent with all the true and faithful witnesses: for support to the latter, they betake themselves to heathen or fabulous stories; against which the sacred oracles universally depose.

The design of God in the mission of Jesus, was evidently to establish the belief and adoration of ONE ONLY GOD, under the pleasing appellation of a Universal Parent. But if we admit the doctrine of the Divine Sonship, we cannot reasonably oppose polytheism of any kind: for every argument in favor of a plurality of divine persons, becomes a pillar in the Pagan temple. The whole fabric of the heathen mythology was built on the doctrine of Theogony, whereby they could, at all times, multiply their gods to whatever extent they pleased. Whilst therefore the notion of divine sonship, emanations, or processions, stands approved by the Christian churches, their attempts, to christianize the heathen world, will always prove abortive; for they will never be able to disprove Roman, Grecian, or Asiatic Theology. To establish the doctrine of the simple humanity of Jesus in opposition to the heathen dogmas of idolatrous nations, we offer the following arguments, which, though they may not produce conviction in the mind of those, who either despise or dread the use of reason, will suffice to dispel the clouds of mysticism, darkness, and superstition, from the minds of rational and candid christians.

1. *Every doctrine concerning the person of Christ, except that of my text, is involved in mystery, absurdity and contradiction.* Those,

who believe in a God-man, are forced to say, he had two natures ; the one omniscient the other ignorant : the one weak the other omnipotent : the one divine the other human : and to cover these palpable contradictions; and unite things devoid of all affinity, they cast a mystic veil over them, saying, he had only one person ! Now if any of these advocates of mystic delusion, will tell what an intellectual nature is without a person, I should then know something of which I now fear I shall die ignorant. They tell us Christ had only one person ; if so, he had only one nature ; and that was the nature of man. But his two natures were united in one person ; if so, the divine and human were amalgamated into one chaos of jarring and irreconcilable elements ! No ! the two natures were united without mixture or confusion !! Good God ! my head is confused !! Absurdity ! Rhapsody ! Heresy ! Confusion ! Eternal God blow with thy winds, and sweep them all away.

2. *God never promised more than a human Messiah.* In the promises he is described the seed of the woman, Gen. 3. 15. The seed of Abraham in whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed, Gen. 22. 18. Moses told the Israelites, the Messiah should be one of them like to him, Deut. 18. 15. Isaiah describes him as a man of sorrows, Chap. 53. 3. In the promises to David he is distinctly predicted to be his son and off-spring : and never once, in all the prophecies does there one intimation occur, that Christ should be more than a man by nature.

3. *The Jews never expected their Messiah to be more than a man.* This proposition is confirmed by the history of that people in all ages, the present not excepted. When Justin, who had been a Platonic philosopher, began to introduce the heathen theogony into the religion of Jesus, Trypho, a Jew, remonstrated, saying " they who think that Jesus was a man, and, chosen of God, was anointed the Christ, appear to me to advance a more probable opinion than yours ; for all of us expect that Christ will be born a man ; if he therefore be the Christ, he must, by all means, be a man." See dialogue p. 235. It also appears from the first book of Origen against Celsus, that all the Jews, in his time, believed that Christ was described by all their prophets as a man only. Athanasius, de Sent. Dion. says, " the Jews were all firmly persuaded, that their Messiah should be nothing more than a man like themselves." St. Augustine, Confess. B. 7. C. 9, acknowledges that he was a believer in the simple humanity of Christ till he read the works of a Platonic philosopher ! Mr. Linsey, in his address to the students of Oxford and Cambridge, has shown that Justin was the first who taught the pre-existence of Christ. The truth of Linsey's proposition is almost entirely conceded by Justin himself. " If, says he, I should be unable to prove his pre-existence, Jesus may still be the Christ, though it appear that he was a man born of man and become Christ by election."

See Lardner on the Logos and Whitby on Rom. 9. 5. The attempt to deify the Messiah, was the principal cause of separation between the Jewish and Gentile Christians in the second Century ; for, since the Babylonian captivity, the Jews have beheld, with detestation, every enticement to idolatry ; and, consequently, never can become Christians 'till these Christians put away the abominable thing !!

4. *The History of Christ is the history of a Man.*—He tells his adverse countrymen, who called him the carpenter, the son of Joseph and Mary, “ ye both know me and whence I am : ye seek to kill me, a man, who has told you the truth.” He was born as a man, experienced many dangers in infancy—grew up like other children—increased in wisdom as in stature, and wrought at his father’s trade till thirty years of age. He was weary and faint—he hungered and thirsted—wept and rejoiced—was grieved and tempted—he died and was buried ! His disciples believed him to be a man and treated him as such. They admonished him, they rebuked him and denied him ! When the people saw him work miracles, they glorified God who had given such power to men ; and when they beheld the miraculous appearances at his death, no change was produced in the mind of the spectators concerning his nature, but their conclusion was “certainly this was a righteous man.” After the disciples were endued with the holy spirit on the day of Pentecost, they still remained in the belief that he was only a man ; Peter so describes him in my text, and Paul says, “there is one mediator, the man Christ Jesus.” 1 Tim. 2. 5. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews argues that it behoved Christ in all things to be made like his brethren. Heb. 2. 11, 14, 18 ; that both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, *nature and origin*, hence he is not ashamed to call them brethren : consequently Jesus must have been a real man. Christ is therefore our real kinsman, being born of man not only man but the son of man by natural descent from Adam ; and being the only one that was free, he ransoms us, *Jure propinquitate*, by virtue of kindred. The Evangelist, Luke, carries his genealogy through David and Abraham up to Adam, to show that Jesus was that seed of the woman, who should bruise the serpent’s head ; the seed of Abraham in whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed ; the son of David, in whom the everlasting kingdom, promised to that Patriarch, should be established. But what meaning could there be in all these things, if Christ was by nature a foreigner to our earth and, to our race ? Nay ! what is worst of all, what hope could man derive from the example or resurrection of a god or an angel ? None at all ! But if Jesus was really a man then we may aspire after his piety and hope for a glorious resurrection.

The miracles performed by Jesus, cannot be admitted as proof that he was more than man. Though he possessed more of the spirit than any other man, yet the prophet Elisha could tell the king of Israel

the secret counsels of the king of Syria, 2 Kings, 6. 12. He saw and heard the whole transaction between Gehazi and Naaman.—Nor was he present when the widow's oil increased; nor when Naaman was healed, 2 Kings, 4, 4-7 and 5, 12, 26.

Though many of my Unitarian and Universalist brethren still believe in a demi-god, and in all the unintelligibility of transmigration and metamorphosis, yet I am happy to behold the rapid progress of divine truth; and venture to predict that the period is near when the Arian churches of America, like those of England, shall be swept as with a whirlwind, whilst the Humanitarian will flourish like a green bay tree! At no remote period the gigantic Lardner stood alone; potent only through the Almighty of truth. He conquered! Joined by that venerable confessor, Linsey, and the philosophical, though persecuted, Priestley, the little band soon put on the laurels of victory. Their triumphs were splendid, their retinue glorious! Some of the most intelligent and brightest ornaments of humanity enlisted under their banners, and the old Puritanical churches followed in the rear. O for a name among the Lockes, the Lardners, the Linseys, and Priestleys, and my peaceful ashes shall rest in quietude, inurned in the tomb of glory; and my history shall be embalmed in the memory of the blessed!

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



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